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Antiracist and Faith-based: Critical Pedagogy-Informed Writing and Information Literacy Instruction at a Hispanic-Serving, Lutheran Liberal Arts University

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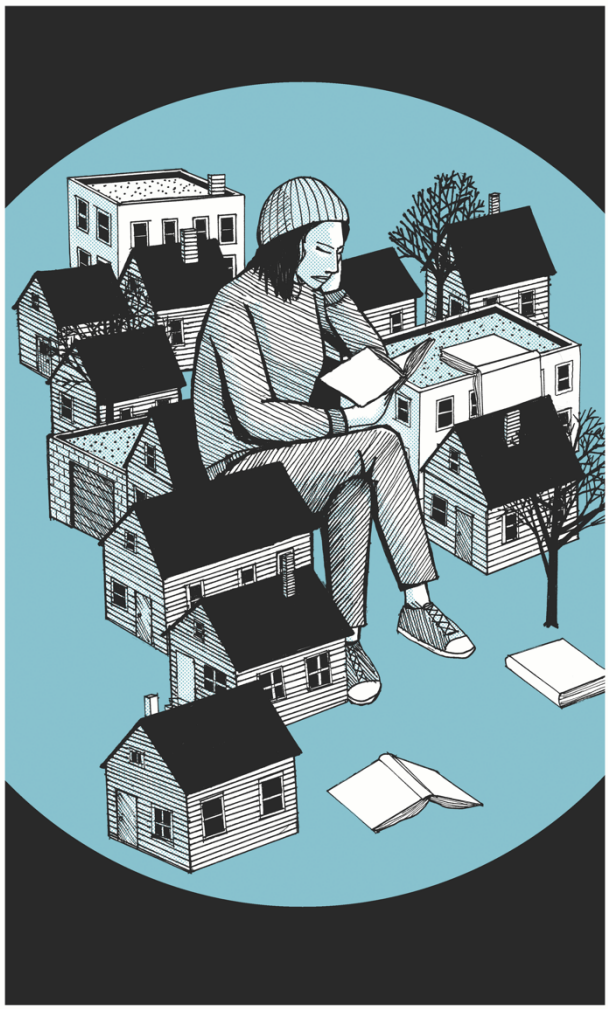

"LIBERATING LEARNING", ALEC DUNN VIA JUST SEEDS

Introduction

Christianity in the United States seems to be at a political crossroads, with some church go-ers wanting to travel the well-worn path of white supremacy, while others are committed to the path of social justice. How, then, might a small faith-based liberal arts university negotiate the competing narratives regarding systemic racism, especially considering its white Christian history? The answer lies in institutional change and anti-racist education. In this case, the authors' collaboration between the English department and the library advances racial equity and inclusion by integrating critical information literacy (IL) in a first-year writing (FYW) course, following the Lutheran educational tradition of valuing inquiry. Critical pedagogy in IL represents "a natural growth in understanding literacy as a contested social construction, rather than as a naturally occurring phenomenon" (Elmborg "Foreword" ix). It allows learners to identify power structures and privilege within the sources they consult. Critical pedagogy-informed writing and information literacy instruction provide opportunities for cross-racial dialogue on race and racism in the classroom, decenter whiteness in the curriculum, and move this small liberal arts university towards alignment with its founding denomination's social justice mission.

California Lutheran University is located on a 290-acre campus in the predominantly white, suburban community of Thousand Oaks, California, on unceded land of the indigenous Chumash people. The university began as California Lutheran College, a small liberal arts school founded in 1959 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church, one of three Lutheran bodies that merged in 1988 to become the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA). Unlike many American churches, the ELCA's social position is radical in its commitment to inclusion and diversity in the church and society, seeking equity and full participation for "women, people of color, minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, people who are marginalized or living in poverty, and the LGBTQ community" ("Mission and Vision"). Soldberg observes that the historical Lutheran perspective on faith and learning includes a critical tradition "marked by an investigative spirit––a willingness to ask deep questions and to query accepted assumptions." (Solberg 52). In a similar way, Swanson and Wold state that the Lutheran tradition "prizes ambiguity, risk-taking, and controversy [and] calls for thoughtfulness and reflection rather than an affirmation of clear-cut absolutes and simple answers." It also encourages scholars to be prepared to "wrestle with complex and complicated questions without the assurance that they will ever come to uniform and harmonious conclusions" (Swanson and Wold 98).

This sort of questioning is definitive of the liberal arts tradition. A liberal arts education is meant to liberate the mind and equip its students to flourish as free citizens in society. When California Lutheran College became a university in 1986, there was concern that its focus on the liberal arts would be sacrificed, and the humanities in particular would only serve as general ed requirements for the professional schools. Also of significance was the conviction that the school could no longer limit itself to serving Lutherans, but must serve a more diverse population (Swanson and Wold 114). Since that time, this conviction has been realized. Cal Lutheran has become non-sectarian, with Lutherans in the minority amongst both students and faculty. In fact, in 2020, only 11% of the traditional undergraduate students identified themselves as Lutheran, compared to 100% in the first class that began in 1961. Even so, the University's stated core values remain reflective of the Christian humanist values of the ELCA, including a commitment to embrace people of all faiths, as well as "value diversity and inclusiveness, practice tolerance and acceptance, and treat one another with respect, civility, and compassion" ("Identity").

Since 1990, the university has been awarded several grants aimed to increase diversity within the student body, faculty, and staff, including monies from the James Irvine foundation, which were to be used to "foster a campus climate that encourages inclusion, cross–cultural interaction, respect for and appreciation of diversity and global awareness" ("CLU Receives"). After several years of sustained investment in recruitment and retention of Latinx students, Cal Lutheran was designated a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI) in 2016. Additionally, in response to an accreditation recommendation in 2015, Cal Lutheran has sought to diversify its faculty. Since 2015, the university has increased its BIPOC faculty by 12% (Biasotti). These efforts, however, have not adequately addressed issues of race and racism on campus, especially from the BIPOC students' point of view. In a 2020 survey, nearly half of all BIPOC students responded that they had experienced feeling lonely, isolated, and excluded as a result of the campus racial climate (National). As reported in the student newspaper, students of color have often found themselves subject to microaggressions and discrimination (Salguero).

One of the misfortunes of Cal Lutheran's non-sectarian nature seems to be that it has not followed the lead of the ELCA, which has developed racial justice statements and resources since 1993. Cal Lutheran had not taken a hard and honest look at institutional racism prior to 2020. In contrast, the ELCA issued yet another social statement in 2019, in which the church apologized to people of African descent "for its historical complicity in slavery and its enduring legacy of racism in the United States and globally" (Caldwell). Cal Lutheran does not yet offer a culture where most students feel comfortable discussing race, and students have for the most part lacked opportunities for honest conversations about race and racism in the classroom. Five months after the racist incidents on campus, and two months after George Floyd's death, the president and cabinet issued a statement recognizing the need for "broad, systemic change," and promising to make "clear, measurable progress to end institutional and systemic racism" ("Anti-Racism"). Part of that commitment has been to pay heed to an external report that recommended Cal Lutheran faculty create more opportunities for cross-racial engagement in courses. This move serves to allow students to develop the language and critical thinking skills necessary to engage in meaningful dialogue on race and racism (National). In a previous

article, the authors explain the misalignment between institutional inclusion and diversity values and teaching practices in FYW and IL instruction as an impetus for curriculum change (Kwast et al.). Here, the authors describe the impact of that curriculum change, and how critical and culturally relevant FYW and IL instruction created more spaces for meaningful writing and conversations on racism that extended outside of individual classrooms. These multimodal conversations were published in the English Department's online journal, as part of the university's weeklong event celebrating student research and creative accomplishments, and involved students, faculty, writing center staff, and librarians.

Critical Library Instruction

While critical pedagogy is well-established within the field of Library and Information Sciences (LIS), it is often marked as a form of 'radical librarianship' rather than as a necessary lens through which meaningful change can occur. LIS often addresses questions of racialized power through the lens of diversity. Diversity is lifted up and highlighted as a core value for most westernized library associations, with aspirational diversity standards and guidelines detailed for libraries to model (Hudson 3). While diversity should be a fundamental goal, it is often used to deflect meaningful criticism of racism in the field. As Tracie Hall writes, "If the education system has been reticent in its discussion of racism, the library and information science field has seemingly slapped itself with a gag order. While the discussion of diversity in libraries has proliferated over the past few decades, meaningful dialogue around race has been eviscerated or altogether evaded" (193). LIS is entrenched in whiteness, as is demonstrated through the ways in which information is organized and what information is deemed to be important, and through the very individuals who are often tasked with relaying guidance. The most recent survey conducted by the American Library Association found that roughly 88% of all credentialed librarians are white, a number that decreases only slightly to 86% when looking at librarians in higher education (American Library Association). This is not representative of BIPOC disinterest in the field. It instead represents a history of issues in recruiting, maintaining, and supporting librarians of color and other marginalized identities. Libraries have ultimately been complicit with "structuring and presenting a single, knowable reality" (Elmborg, "Critical Information Literacy" 198) by excluding alternate intelligences and voices.

Critical pedagogy was a radical concept when Yvonne first incorporated it into Cal Lutheran's IL instruction. Though information literacy is a required student learning outcome for undergraduate courses, there had never been a systematic program that ensured that library instruction is equitably distributed amongst all populations, or that took into account the students' different cultural experiences. For the most part, librarians were called into classes to teach students the bibliographic skills of finding information and avoiding plagiarism according to presently outmoded standards and outcomes. When Yvonne was hired in 2014, she recognized the necessity to disrupt the university's cultural narrative, and that a reframing of IL was of paramount importance. While it is widely recognized that racial and social-class achievement gaps exist in higher education, there has been a lack of scholarship related to information literacy and student success amongst traditionally underrepresented students. Research does show, however, that students find their academic work more meaningful when they are able to incorporate their identities, experiences, and interests -- a learning practice can be transferred to other contexts (Folk 665). In order to ensure that all incoming first-year students received instruction that encouraged and amplified their own voices and experiences, Yvonne began collaborating with the Religion department to provide instruction in its first-year religion course. In this course––which is required of all first-year and transfer students––Yvonne jettisoned the outdated IL standards and learning outcomes consisting of bibliographic how-tos in favor of the threshold concepts, knowledge practices, and dispositions described in the Association of College and Research Libraries' Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education ("Framework"). While not explicitly anti-racist or promoting equity and inclusion, the Framework nonetheless recognizes that students come with knowledge and are information creators, providing an environment that better prepares students to think and act critically in a changing information landscape. The Religion department at Cal Lutheran teaches critical thinking skills in the context of culture and personal identity, and served as the perfect launchpad for systematically embedding critical IL into the curriculum.

Yvonne–– as head of undergraduate instruction at the library–– became convinced that librarians needed to be more intentional about bringing critical pedagogy into library IL sessions. In their joint quest to more deeply integrate critical IL in undergraduate programs, Yvonne and Meghan sought to collaborate with the English department to embed IL in all FYW courses, similar to what had been accomplished in the Religion department. This would require a transformation not only of how IL was perceived for English faculty, but also of Meghan's role as the library's liaison to the English department. Upon receiving requests for library instruction, Meghan asked faculty to collaborate by providing her with their class syllabus and assignment rubric, and then joining her in a conversation about the appropriate timing and content for the IL session. This collaboration with individual faculty allowed Meghan to create learning outcomes and scaffold instruction for IL sessions across FYW courses. This scaffolded content would become the template for the library's embedded IL modules soon to come.

This preliminary work toward developing IL equity also provided insight into how some faculty understood authority. Esteeming academic peer-review as the most legitimate source of authority, some faculty expected librarians to refer students to published scholars alone, framing all other sources as being less valuable. Because peer-reviewed scholarship is evaluated by others before publication, these sources require less rigorous evaluation by students to determine the source's reliability. Librarians could focus instruction on the mechanics of finding sources

as opposed to the evaluation of sources. While there is value to be found in this class of scholarship, this approach leaves out critical analyses of the peer-review process and the voices it traditionally excludes. Peer-review favors scholarship that replicates authorized knowledge and resists alternative thinking. This authorized knowledge is historically linked to white ideology, steeped in a legacy of racism and white supremacy. Excluding other sources discounts the authority that stems from marginalized communities and ultimately limits students' ability to see themselves as authorities. Through attempting to teach IL as a 'neutral' activity, librarians would again be reinforcing the status quo (Pashia 92). Despite this challenge, the librarians remained on course to incorporate critical IL by providing students with sample topics, search strategies, and activities that required them to engage a diversity of authorial voices. This critical IL tack provoked not only the students, but the faculty into a transformative dialogue with information sources.

Prior to the pandemic shutdown in 2020, Yvonne and Jolivette met briefly to discuss a collaboration, building upon Meghan's work with the English department. That summer, Yvonne worked with Jolivette to embed critical IL within the learning management system of all FYW courses. First semester FYW students would encounter the ACRL's threshold concepts of how authority is constructed and contextual, and how the information creation process ends in a variety of sources and formats that can be evaluated according to various criteria. Second semester students would build on those concepts as they learned about research being a project of inquiry, and how searching for information is a process of strategic exploration. Pre-tests and post-tests would be used to assess student learning. In addition to the embedded modules, Meghan developed a reading list to complement the common reading text in the first-year writing courses. When conducting in-person IL instruction, Meghan generally leads an activity where students physically handle a range of books and articles. Students are asked to categorize the pieces as popular or scholarly sources, and the class discusses why they do or don't agree with the assessment. The activity demonstrates to students not only that assessing authority isn't always straightforward, but also that authority can be found outside of peer-reviewed sources. The scholarly publishing landscape presents numerous formal and informal barriers for researchers of color. This includes barriers from reviewers who are skeptical of research that challenges dominant narratives and barriers from universities who pressure researchers to publish in top-tier journals, allowing these publishers to serve as gatekeepers of knowledge (Settles 10).

In asking students to discuss the authority found in popular sources, this activity helps to further decenter whiteness as authority. Meghan sought to reimagine this activity within the reading list. Using Ta-Nehisi Coates's essay "The Case for Reparations" as a starting point, she found a collection of additional sources to further expand upon the themes of redlining, the Great Migration, and reparations. This included primary sources, such as the 1962 Norris Vitchek article "Confessions of a Block-Buster," current news sources, scholarly books and articles, and popular sources like David Frum's response to Ta-Nehisi Coates's "The Impossibility of Reparations." A selection of videos, streaming and DVD, was also identified to provide multiple modalities through which students and instructors could engage with Coates's themes. Selections included Coleman Hughes's 2019 opening statement in opposition to reparations at a House committee hearing and Julie Dash's short film *Standing at the Scratch Line*. The list represented a shift toward incorporating diverse voices and centering the Black experience as a legitimate source of knowledge.

The reading list was created as a tool for students as they explored Coates's essay, but it proved to be a valuable tool in unexpected ways. While some students cited sources pulled directly from the reading guide, others used it instead as a launching point for finding their own unique sources. In Jolivette's class, for example, several students referenced sources from the reading guide, the most commonly-cited sources being Frum's response to Coates's essay, and the video of Hughes's statement at a House committee hearing. Students used these sources to demonstrate their understanding of a counterargument to Coates's proposals. Meanwhile, students in other classes cited a range of sources accessed from the library, including scholarly sources on reparations from the *University of Memphis Law Review* and the *Review of Black Political Economy*, and articles from popular sources such as *The Washington Post, The National Review,* and CBS News. The reading guide also proved to be an equally valuable tool to continue engaging FYW instructors with diverse examples of authorial authority. Instructors used the curated list as a starting point as they determined how best to structure their curriculum. Instructors were able to embed links to the reading list or, after consulting the guide, add direct links to selected readings within the learning management system, demonstrating that such a list engages both instructors and students in critical dialogues on race and authority.

Culturally Relevant First-Year Writing Instruction

Like IL instruction, FYW instruction is also experiencing a disciplinary shift that demands a critical assessment of the teaching and administration of these large programs and the relationship to systemic power within the university. In their introduction to *Black Perspectives in Writing Program Administration*, Staci Perryman-Clark and Collin Lamont Craig call for allies to "position blackness at the center of the fight against oppressive and racist institutional practices" (24). The nationwide protests against anti-Black violence over the summer prompted Jolivette, as the writing program administrator at her university, to take up Perryman-Clark and Craig's call to action. Allyship within and across departments and academic units such as between the library and the English department are key to creating, sustaining, and institutionalizing antiracist curricular initiatives beyond individual courses, and at the program level. A culturally relevant instructional approach recognizes the intertwined components of setting high expectations for academic achievement and cultivating socio-political consciousness

for all students, so that they connect their academic writing to problem-solving and agency in their communities. Ladson-Billings describes cultural competence as "the ability to help students appreciate and celebrate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge of and fluency in at least one other culture" (75). This is a different approach to how FYW had been taught at Cal Lutheran. Previously, FYW sections at Cal Lutheran shared a focus on grammar instruction in Standardized Edited American English (SEAS); most instructors taught writing about literature. As the writing program administrator, Jolivette initiated a program-wide curricular revision that equitizes learning outcomes and centers Black voices and experiences through a common text, toward more critical cultural competence for all students.

Jolivette sought to shift FYW instruction to a more inclusive framework for first-generation college students, and particularly for Black and Latinx students, so that first-year writing courses would be a space for all students to hone critical thinking strategies by investigating systemic racism. Culturally relevant pedagogy is valuable for a diverse student population, such as that at Cal Lutheran, because it is attentive to students who may have been previously disadvantaged in their education, while also teaching "those in the mainstream to develop the kinds of skills that will allow them to critique the very basis of their privilege and advantage" (Ladson-Billings 83). In other words, students of all backgrounds learn to examine structural power and its reproduction through culture, as a way to think through and find meaning from their everyday experiences. Towards this goal, Ta-Nehisi Coates's 2014 essay "The Case for Reparations" was chosen as the common text for all sections of the first semester FYW course. Coates builds his argument for reparations to descendants of U.S. slavery by providing multiple narratives of Black experience through historical research, interviews, and data. The multimedia version online provides an even deeper dive into systemic racism from multiple perspectives of community activists interviewed by Coates for the essay.

Seven years after publication, "The Case for Reparations" has been taught in high school and college English and writing classes as a model of written argumentation; one can search for "The case for reparations ethos pathos logos" and find pre-written outlines for desperate students tasked with rhetorical analysis of Coates's essay. For a more critically engaged use of Coates's essay, there is John Conley's "To Teach the University is to Teach Reparations: A Class Project" in the spring 2021 issue of this journal, which describes one writing professor's place-based assignments in great detail. But at Cal Lutheran, FYW instructors had room to design their lesson on the essay, so rather than describe a specific assignment, Jolivette will describe campus-wide discussions based on assigning this common text to first-year students. The English Department, library, and campus writing center engaged with Coates's essay throughout the academic year, creating classroom and co-curricular spaces for talking about race and writing. Creating a common assignment and text for all FYW sections was extremely challenging during COVID-19. During the same semester that they had to shift to a fully-online teaching format, FYW instructors had to integrate a common text and assignment into their courses. Some instructors voiced unease at teaching a topic like reparations and systemic racism, especially during a highly polarized U.S. presidential election year. Jolivette tried to ease their concerns by focusing meetings on what instructors already knew: teaching critical reading and written argumentation. The argument essay is assigned as the last of the three formal essay assignments required for Critical Reading and Writing I. Instructors had the leeway to design their own prompts focused on "The Case for Reparations," but were required to include specific criteria that reflected the typical outcomes of a FYW course, such as rhetorical awareness, genre-based organizational patterns, and attention to language and citation conventions. Students also had to demonstrate an understanding of information literacy, such as basing their argument on relevant and diverse perspectives related to Coates's argument. In support of the IL outcomes, instructors were strongly encouraged to assign Pearson Library's "The Case for Reparations" Reading Guide, and videos on critically evaluating sources in the library module, described earlier in this essay. Jolivette provided sample prompts to instructors to model moving away from binary, pro/con arguments, and emphasizing student-driven inquiry and communication. Some of the model prompts asked students to imagine the rhetorical situation as a conversation with one of their chosen communities, or with Coates himself. Overall, instructors were free to design the assignment to meet the learning outcomes, as long as students engaged in deep reading of Coates's ideas and made connections to other sources.

Possible Prompt for Coates's "The Case for Reparations."

Assume that a specific community to which you belong (Cal Lutheran, family, neighborhood, church, workplace, sports team, etc.) does not know much about arguments for or against reparations for descendants of enslaved people in the U.S. What is a concept or term from Coates's essay that is essential for community members to understand in order to join the discussion in an informed and ethical way? Why and how would you teach this concept/term to your community? Your thesis should answer both questions and explain why you selected this concept/term. Be sure to define the term, referencing Coates and additional sources discussed in class. Be sure you address any alternative definitions, or counter-arguments to your thesis. Write your essay with your community as your audience.

The culminating goal was to create spaces for conversations on race and writing in the larger university community by celebrating our FYW writers. The university holds its annual weeklong Festival of Scholars event in April, during which students and faculty share their research and creative works with the entire campus community through poster sessions, performances, capstone presentations, art exhibits, and so forth. Jolivette planned the inaugural Celebration of First-Year Writing and

Research as part of the Festival of Scholars program. She envisioned the celebration taking place in the library, gathering FYW classes, essay award winners, and their professors, and featuring brief conversations about their writing and teaching processes toward creating their winning essays. However, due to pandemic restrictions during spring 2021, plans shifted to an online journal, which would be edited, written, and designed by English and the library, furthering their collaboration. At the end of the fall semester, FYW instructors nominated thirteen essays for the Outstanding and Honorable Mention Essay awards. Selections were judged by a faculty member in English and by two staff members from the Writing Center, the assistant director and the writing across the curriculum coordinator, who is also a Spanish/English bilingual specialist. The "About" page of *Inquiry* explains that the journal "recognizes student writers who engaged with Coates's argument with curiosity and an open mind, while creating their own argument by voicing their perspective on the topic of reparations." Judges also considered the writer's use of sources from the Pearson Library reading guide and databases.

The Honorable Mention Essay was awarded to a business economics major, Noah Rigo, who focused his essay on the financial losses suffered by Black Americans due to the racist practices of contract loans and redlining, which he explains in his essay. He references the historian Eric Foner, who is quoted extensively by Coates. Noah argues for specific types of reparations, such as "low to no cost education and low to no interest loans to create fair housing." The web page highlighting Noah's winning essay also showcases a brief exchange between Noah and his writing professor, Linda Olson:

> Professor Olson: How did you arrive at the solution of low- and no-interest loans?
>
> Noah: African Americans were being cheated in the housing market with redlining and misleading contracts in buying a home. I arrived at this answer because it seemed like a viable solution that provides a way for people to have stable lives by investing in homes and helping to build a community. It allows someone to gain more equity in their home without having to make ridiculous payments to a mortgage company.

In reading Coates's lengthy ten-section essay, Noah found a way to investigate the economic impact of white supremacy on the Black community, which reflects his interests as a business economics major, but also demonstrates his growth in cultural competence and socio-political awareness. The judges also commended Noah for his focused argument for reparations. Noah's conversation with his professor, his essay, and "applause" from the judges are all published online, representing a space in which members of the Cal Lutheran community talked about writing and racism with each other, albeit virtually.

The Outstanding English 110 essay was awarded to Charis Pulei, a theatre major. Charis and her professor, Dr. Scott Chiu, recorded their conversation about writing and teaching about racism in a meaningful way during a year of national protests and COVD-19. The video shows the split screen of their Zoom videos, side by side, in conversation with each other:

> Scott Chiu: In your paper, you make it very clear that reparations … is not even a question to talk about in this paper. It's really about how we do that, and you have a very specific audience in mind, that is, the educated public, the government officials who might be making a decision on this particular process. What about your fellow CLU students? How would you approach this topic [with students] differently?
>
> Charis: So if I were speaking to the average Cal Lu student, I would give a little bit more of a basic breakdown on certain topics. For example, systematic racism and the different types of systematic racism that Ta-Nehisi Coates covers in his paper, and really explain them. That way it could be more understood and taken in on a deeper level by students. I think though a lot of people have a very broad education on [racism], they don't have a very deep education. (Chiu and Pulei 2:30 - 3:58)

Charis adds that she would also explain to her peers at Cal Lutheran contemporary ideas about reparations, adding, "I think that's something that I can even clarify for myself (laughs) … Because there's a lot of belief that 'Oh it's just handing people money.' But legally and realistically, that's not all it is" (Chiu and Pulei 4:16 – 4:32).

This exchange illustrates culturally relevant writing instruction: academic achievement, socio-political consciousness, and cultural competency. Scott's question prompts Charis to think about how she would communicate her argument to her fellow students at Cal Lutheran. Charis responds that she would use the rhetorical strategy of defining key concepts, so that her audience would have a clearer and deeper understanding of systemic racism – knowledge that she suspects her fellow students lack. She then adds that writing on reparations has also led her to gain a clearer understanding of the issue and of systemic racism overall. For Charis, writing her argument on the topic of reparations, drawing on Coates's essay and her other sources, is both communicative and epistemic, in that her writing leads her to new, meaningful knowledge that she wants to share with her peers. Her deeper understanding of systemic racism helps her refute misconceptions of reparations, thereby equipping her to create a more powerful argument, as she writes: "I write this essay being a woman of colour and part of Generation Z. … I feel it is my generation's duty to do as much as they can to better the world. And in this case, I will explain why reparations are not only the ethical choice but why productive reparations will benefit America as a whole" (Pulei par. 3). In response, a judge comments that Charis "recognizes her unique position in the world and moves her thinking towards social change."

The 12-minute video (https://sites.google.com/callutheran.edu/writing-rhetoric/charis-pulei?authuser=0) is a friendly conversation between Charis and Scott on writing and teaching; one can see clearly how much they mutually respect each other as writers and thinkers. Charis asks Scott how he approaches

teaching "heavy topics like racism, especially in times like we've been going through recently," and how he teaches new writers so that "students can understand and formulate their own ideas." Scott responds that he would like to ask his English Department colleagues this question when they have a chance to talk, acknowledging that "It is not easy at all" but he tries to connect topics like racism to a local context, such as the recent racial conflict on the Cal Lutheran campus, in order to make the conversation more meaningful to students (Chiu and Pulei 6:33 – 8:07). Coates's essay and the sources in the related library reading guide invite FYW students to read Black experiences and voices, and to investigate and write about systemic racism in ways that are meaningful to the student writers.

As pointed out in the introduction of this essay, one of the hallmarks of Lutheran education is to promote critical inquiry by evaluating one's own and others' assumptions on controversial issues, through forming complex questions without seeking definitive answers, and by reflecting on the process and on any discomfort or ambiguity it brings. This Lutheran goal of critical inquiry sets intellectual and social justice goals that require listening to Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and Asian American contributors to their respective fields. Carmen Kynard, a contributor to *Black Perspectives in Writing Program Administration*, explains: "Reconstructing white institutions (or simply accepting more students of color or hiring more faculty and [writing program administrators] of color) is not the same as dismantling racial violence" (47). Critical and culturally relevant FYW and IL instruction address the "pervasive ordinariness of white supremacy" in academia, no matter how uncomfortable it makes us (Kynard 47). This can be done in FYW and IL instruction by questioning what are deemed authoritative texts, authors, and ways of knowing when teaching critical reading, writing, and information literacy.

Committing to Antiracist Teaching and a Faith-Based Social Justice Mission

Small faith-based liberal arts institutions face many of the same challenges that other small liberal arts colleges face, especially those that have long lacked racial diversity amongst its faculty and student populations, and that are located in wealthier, whiter communities, like California Lutheran's location in suburban Thousand Oaks, CA. To address racial equity on their campuses, college presidents who also identify as people of color launched the Liberal Arts Colleges Racial Equity Alliance (LACRELA) in 2021 with 68 member institutions, including two ELCA-affiliated colleges. Under consultation with Dr. Shaun Harper and the USC Race & Equity Center, the goal of this alliance is "to address the unique racial challenges and circumstances the colleges are facing, such as the 'cultural mismatch' between their very socially liberal campuses and the surrounding communities where the colleges are located, which are sometimes more conservative" (Anderson). Although Harper has also consulted with Cal Lutheran about the racial climate of the university, issuing the 2019 report that recommended the university create more cross-racial dialogue in courses (National), Cal Lutheran has yet to join LACRELA at the time of writing. The authors hope that campus leadership will enact its recently-issued anti-racist statement by joining other small liberal arts college leaders in uniting for racial equity.

In the meantime, the English Department and the library continue their commitment to antiracist information literacy and writing instruction by preparing for their second year of collaboration. For fall 2021, all FYW sections assigned an essay by the novelist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Viet Thanh Nguyen, titled "Asian Americans are Still Caught in the Trap of the 'Model Minority' Stereotype. And it Creates Inequality for All," originally published in *Time* in 2020. Nguyen begins his essay with his reflection on Tou Thao, the Hmong-American police officer who stood by as his colleague, Derek Chauvin, murdered George Floyd on the streets of Minneapolis. Nguyen offers this meditation: "The face of Tou Thao is like mine and not like mine, although the face of George Floyd is like mine and not like mine too" (par. 3). Nguyen asks the reader to consider what it means to find solidarity across the diverse ethnicities of "Asian American" and to also identify cross-racially with Black America, as a way to fight systemic racism. Related resources, including a reading guide curated by Meghan, are available once again for faculty and students. We will recognize outstanding essays and their authors at the second annual Celebration of First-Year Writing and Research, hopefully during a celebratory in-person gathering, but also by publishing student writing in the online journal. One difference this time around is that the FYW faculty selected the common text for this year, showing their ownership and commitment to integrating culturally relevant writing instruction in their courses.

Lutheranism's faith tradition includes a historical call to critical and often radical questioning that challenges accepted assumptions and ways of being. Antiracist pedagogy aligns critical inquiry with social justice in ways that stimulate cross-racial dialogue about complex issues such as dismantling systemic racism. These outcomes align with both the liberal arts tradition and the faith-based liberal arts mission to educate global leaders who are committed to social justice.

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